



Public Schools of North Carolina

State Board of Education
Phillip J. Kirk, Jr., Chairman

Department of Public Instruction
Michael E. Ward, State Superintendent

www.ncpublicschools.org

February 22, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: LEA Superintendents and Principals

FROM: Michael E. Ward

SUBJECT: Statewide Tornado Drill

While education of North Carolina's children is our primary focus, we are also responsible for their safety while they are in school. That is why I urge all schools to take part in the tornado drill scheduled for Wednesday March 13.

Because protocols do not allow the National Weather Service to issue practice tornado watches or warnings, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management will activate the Emergency Alert System at 9:05 a.m. on March 13, with a Required Monthly Test that will mention the tornado drill and tell listeners to begin the drill. All radio, television, and many cable TV operators will interrupt normal programming to carry the Required Monthly Test. At 9:15, the National Weather Service will issue a Required Weekly Test over the NOAA weather radio system. If you have not started the drill, this is another signal to begin. The tornado drill will conclude when participants complete their drill activities. No "all clear" message will be issued. If there is any possibility of foul weather on the 13, the drill will be held on Friday, March 15.

Make sure you know how your schools will be notified about severe weather. Will they rely on the NOAA Weather Alert Radio, local radio and television stations, or some other means, such as a telephone call from your local county's 9-1-1 center? Please do not assume someone will automatically contact you or your schools. March 3-9 is Severe Weather Awareness Week in North Carolina. This is a great time to make sure you, your teachers, and students know what to do when thunderstorms and tornadoes threaten.

If your school cannot take part in the drill on March 13 or 15, please conduct your own drill in late March or early April. Should you need additional information, please contact your county's Emergency Management Coordinator.

Thank you for your cooperation.

MEW:mhw